



## COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION FOR INSTITUTIONAL INSPECTIONS  
Room 372, Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
Los Angeles, CA 90012 – (213) 974-1465

FOUNDER  
Mrs. Sybil Brand

CHAIRPERSON  
Mrs. Eleanor R. Montano

VICE CHAIRPERSON  
Mrs. Helen Stathatos

Mr. Frank S. Bacio  
Mr. Vito Cannella  
Mr. James Cragin  
Mr. John A. Hammargren  
Mr. Carl E. Moore  
Mr. Michael A. Russell

# **MINUTES OF THE** **SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION FOR INSTITUTIONAL INSPECTIONS** **MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING** **DECEMBER 15, 2004**

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chair Stathatos called the meeting to order at 10:13 a.m.

## **OPENING CEREMONIES**

Vice Chair Stathatos led the pledge of allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **Present:**

Chair Eleanor R. Montano  
Vice Chair Helen H. Stathatos  
Frank Bacio  
Vito Cannella  
John Hammargren  
Michael Russell  
Carl Moore

### **Absent**

James Cragin

### **Others Present**

Sgt. Victor Lopez, Sheriff's Dept.  
Lydia Fernandez, Probation Dept.  
Ombudsman  
Sonya Noil, Dept. of Children and  
Family Services  
Carla Carr, Auditor-Controller  
Ombudsman  
Lee Millen, Commission Services  
Sherry Scates, Commission Staff  
Twila Kerr, Commission Services

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 1, 2004  
and DECEMBER 8, 2004**

This item was deferred to the December 22<sup>nd</sup> agenda.

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

Chair Montano deferred her report on the "American Leadership Conference" to the December 22<sup>nd</sup> agenda.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

There was none.

**STAFF REPORT**

Sherry Scates, Commission Staff, briefly reviewed the Commission's new filing system and advised that the newly converted files will be completed before the end of the year. Chair Montano noted that these files can be reviewed by Commissioners prior to their inspection tours; however, the files are not to be removed from the office. Commissioners thanked Staff for her efforts in implementing a means by which inspections and monitoring files are documented and readily available for future reference.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Chair Montano briefly reviewed the Auditor-Controller's Program Monitoring Follow-Up Reports for several group homes.

**DEPARTMENT UPDATES ON FACILITY OPERATIONS**

**Sheriff's Department:** Sgt. Victor Lopez advised that Lt. Arthur-Parra was in training and unable to attend today's meeting. Sgt. Lopez briefly reported on the following:

- Recently, a Twin Towers inmate, working the evening shift, slipped out through an open loading dock gate. The escapee walked into the Pasadena Police Station several days later and gave himself up. An investigation is underway to determine how future such escapes can be prevented;
- The current Twin Towers population is approximately 2,300 males and 2,100 females; and
- The department's plans to move the female inmates to the CRDF facility are on hold pending funding. In the meantime, the female inmates will be moved to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor to make room for an inmate reception center.

**Probation Department:** Lydia Fernandez, Ombudsman, reported the following:

- She has accepted a position at Los Padrinos and will no longer be attending the Commission meetings; she believes her replacement to the Commission will be named shortly;
- There is a nationwide search underway for a replacement for Richard Shumsky, Chief of Probation, who recently retired. Paul Higa is the Interim Chief and he is working diligently to tighten up staff discipline and increase case turn around time; and
- Barry Nidorf passed away on 12/14; she will forward details and funeral arrangements to the Commission when they are available.

Commissioner Cannella requested an update on his proposal for a Barber Training Program, which was approved by the Probation Department several years ago.

Vice Chair Stathatos expressed her concern that since the closure of Maclaren Center, children taken from abusive or neglectful situations in the middle of the night might be kept overnight at the Sheriff/police stations or at the social workers home due to the lack of 24-hour emergency intake facilities.

At the request of Commissioners, Ms. Fernandez will have her secretary forward the "Do Not Refer" and "Closed Homes" lists to the Commissioners. Commissioner Moore requested a copy of the monthly inmate complaint report and an update on the issue of pepper spray use by Deputy Probation Officers in juvenile facilities.

Ms. Fernandez advised that she would speak to Mr. Higa regarding the importance of appointing a department representative to work with the Commission.

Commissioners thanked Ms. Fernandez for her work with the Commission and wished her well in her new position.

**Dept. of Children and Family Services:** Sonya Noil, Out of Home Care, DCFS, reported on the following:

- She advised that a representative from DCFS will be in attendance at future Commission Business meetings, and if she is scheduled to

attend the Commission's January Business meeting, she will bring the "Do Not Refer", "Closed Homes" and the "Zip Code" lists;

- The investigation of Star View Adolescent Center is still on-going and the Probation residents have been moved to other facilities;
- Harbor View has completed all the recommendations made by the Commission and now meet the required standards;
- Booth Memorial has been closed and all residents have been transferred to the St. Anne and Florence Crittendon facilities; however, the neighborhood day care facility will remain open until June 2005; and
- Anytime the Commission feels it appropriate, it can request that a fiscal audit be done on a facility

The Commissioners advised Ms. Noil that they have been advised by other County agencies of problems at the O'Conner & Atkins Group Home in Los Angeles and that they, as well as other County agencies, have tried repeatedly to inspect that facility but have been refused admittance by the facility management/staff. Ms. Noil will arrange for the Commissioners to join her department on their inspection of that facility within the next week.

### **FACILITY/GROUP INSPECTION REPORTS**

#### **The Sycamores/Lexington Group Home – 105#2**

Vice Chair Stathatos and Commissioner Cannella visited this facility on December 9<sup>th</sup> and found that the facility had been closed.

#### **The Sycamores/Sierra Madre Group Home – 105#3**

Vice Chair Stathatos and Commissioner Cannella visited this facility on December 13<sup>th</sup> and gave it a rating of **Satisfactory** with no areas of concern observed or reported.

#### **Westside Childrens' Group Home I – 112#2**

Commissioners Moore and Bacio visited this facility on December 9<sup>th</sup> and gave it a rating of **Needs Improvement**. Areas of concern: protruding metal objects in front yard are a safety hazard; hygiene supply is low; client roster, house rules, individual rights and residents' chores are not posted; no disaster drill documentation; carpet needs to be replaced; facility staff unable to provide information regarding residents' spending and clothing allowances; van needs new right front tire; bedrooms need painting; three burners on kitchen stove do not light; and food supply is too low. **A re-inspection is scheduled in one week.**

**Washington Hancock Home – 110#3**

Chair Montano visited this facility on December 9<sup>th</sup> and gave it a rating of **Satisfactory**. Areas of concern: house rules and disaster plans were not posted.

**Drice Group Home – 30#2**

Commissioners Bacio and Moore visited this facility on December 14<sup>th</sup> and gave it a rating of **Satisfactory** with no areas of concern observed or reported.

**NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chair Montano distributed inspection assignments to Commissioners for the following week.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was none.

**MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA (To be presented and placed on a future agenda)**

Discussion regarding honorarium for Caffie Greene, former Commissioner.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chair Montano adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m. in memory of Barry Nidorf, former Chief of the Probation Department.

**Respectfully submitted,**

*Sherry Scates*

**Commission Staff**